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**UZBEKISTAN**

# FIRST PERSON

## New Attitude towards Parenting

### USAID program prepares new parents for childbirth and newborn care



Photo: Project Hope

Janubek Mansurov and his wife Farida watch as a nurse inspects their daughter.

*"I am grateful to the USAID Healthy Family Project that helps train couples like us. I will pass information about the New Parent School to all of my relatives and friends."*

- Janubek Mansurov

Janubek Mansurov was apprehensive about an invitation to the opening of the New Parent School, supported by the USAID Healthy Family Project, in Muzrabad Rayon. "What am I going to do at a maternity hospital?" he thought. "Only women will be there. Maybe my wife can go by herself." In the end, however, he agreed to accompany his wife Farida. This was their first pregnancy and Janubek wanted to be a good father.

New parent classes prepared Janubek and Farida for childbirth and the care of a new baby. The training also convinced Janubek to participate in the actual birth process. No man in his family had done this before. Partner-assisted delivery is very new to the Uzbek family. In the past, men would visit maternity houses only to pay the doctor at discharge, or to inquire about the health of the mother. They were not permitted to visit their wives and children during their hospital recovery.

When Farida delivered their daughter, Janubek was there by her side. He comforted her, gave her sips of fruit juice, and rubbed her back. Of the birth, Janubek says he is filled with respect for his wife's strength and realizes how precious his daughter is. Upon discharge, Farida said that she would never forget the attendance and support of her husband during the delivery and seeing his happy eyes when their daughter was born. "The participation of my husband during the birth of our first child was a great support to me," she said.

Now, Janubek encourages all his friends to attend the New Parent Schools. "It is necessary to continue to train new parents because our mentality still does not accommodate the participation of men in the delivery process," he says.

The New Parent School in Muzrabad was established by the Healthy Family Project and is supported financially by the local health department. New parents learn about the physiology of pregnancy and the labor process; partners are taught how to act during the delivery process and given information on nutrition for pregnant women. They also master the skills of caring for newborns and discuss the advantages of breastfeeding.

The USAID Healthy Family Project is implemented by Project Hope, to improve maternal, child, and reproductive health in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan.